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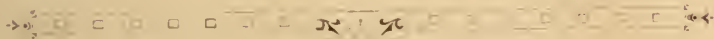
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THE STORY OF FIJI.

BY

REV. JAMES CALVERT.



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THE STORY OF FIJI

AS TOLD BY

REV. JAMES CALVERT,

The Co-Laborer of Rev. John Hunt.

HOW FIJI WAS LIFTED FROM CANNIBALISM TO CHRISTIAN
CIVILIZATION.

Truth Stranger than Fiction.

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FIJI: CANNIBAL AND CHRISTIAN.

DISCOVERY.

The Fiji Islands were discovered first by Tasman, the Dutch navigator, [in 1643], two hundred and forty years ago. Nearly one hundred and thirty years after that [in 1772] Captain Cook lay-to off Vatoa, or Turtle Island, as he passed from the Friendly to the Sandwich Islands, where he was murdered. Captain Bligh, in his launch, after the meeting and capture of the "Bounty" by those who became known as the Pitcairn Islanders, the principal part of whose successors now occupy Norfolk Island, passed through a part of the Fijis in 1789, as he did again three years afterward in the "Providence." And Captain Wilson in 1796, in the London mission ship, the "Duff," had narrow escapes from wreck among the numerous and intricate reefs. But still very little was known of Fiji and its inhabitants beyond the much-dreaded fact, that the people were terrible cannibals.

About the year 1804 several convicts escaped from Australia, who reached and settled in the Islands; some of whom gained notoriety and much influence where they resided, mainly with the chiefs of *Rewa* and *Bau*, the two leading places in the group.

In 1806, trading vessels began to visit the

islands, mainly to obtain sandal-wood to burn as incense in the temples of China, *beche-de-mer* or *trepang*, a sea slug used to make soup for the Celestials, and tortoise-shell; but trading in those days was very limited. Perils abounded everywhere, from the people and from the most dangerous navigation, for which there was no reliable chart previous to the careful and elaborate surveys made by the American and English governments after missionaries were settled in Fiji.

THE ISLANDS.

The group is large, consisting of two hundred and twenty islands and islets, eighty of which are inhabited, and vary greatly in size, some being very small. The two largest—"Na Vanua Leru," and "Na Viti Leru"—"Large Land" and "Large Fiji"—are each ninety miles long and from twenty to fifty broad. The whole area of the group extends from 16° to 21° south latitude, and the longitude, on the same parallel as Greenwich, is three degrees east and two west—or about three hundred miles in latitude and longitude. "A line drawn round the extremity of the colony would describe a figure of which the shortest diameter would be over two hundred and sixty miles in length, the largest three hundred and seventy. The aggregate area of the whole is seven million acres, greater than that of all the "West India Islands." Fiji is situated eighteen hundred miles northeast of Sidney, and twelve hundred miles off Aukland, New Zealand. The population was reckoned at one hundred and fifty thousand

before the king's return from Sydney after the cession of the islands to England, when measles were introduced, which swept away perhaps one-fourth of their number. The country is well watered, having many springs and streams and rivers of fair size on the largest islands, and the rainfall is abundant all the year round. The trade winds are refreshing, and bring moisture which the numerous mountains condense into fruitful showers. Near the large islands an invigorating and cooling land-breeze prevails, blowing from evening until morning, when it is met and driven back by the trade wind. So that, while the tropical heat enervates and tries the European, he does not find the climate to be especially unhealthy, and Fiji has been said to be the best tropical climate ever found. The temperature ranges from 65° to 97° in the shade; and the length of the days varies only two hours and eight minutes.

PRODUCTIONS.

The islands are well wooded. On some of them is an abundance of superior kinds of wood, suitable for building purposes and furniture, and for the masts and yards of canoes. The soil is good and prolific, and easily irrigated for those roots which require water. The productions are varied, excellent and abundant, and are easily obtained. Yams, bananas, bread-fruit, and cocoanuts are the staple vegetable food of the country. The yam, of many species, is planted in hillocks with the ground dug and softened underneath; it grows from a span to six

feet in length, and takes the place, in Fiji, of the potatoe in Europe and elsewhere, and is equally good when boiled, baked, or broiled. So important is the yam that the seasons of its cultivation, growth, and maturity are the chief foundation of the Fijian Kalendar: one month or moon having the name for the time when the ground is cleared, another for digging the hole and planting, another for fixing the reeds for the sprouts to climb on, another for offering the first fruits to their gods, and another for the time when the yams are dug up and stored.

The *ndalo*, or *taro*, is an esculent root of immense value, grown from the tops, one kind grown on dry ground and another on irrigation. It is very excellent as a vegetable, boiled or baked or roasted, hot or cold. It is also pounded, after being cooked, or ground on a rough tree or brain coral, to make very superior puddings. The largest I ever saw was one of nineteen offered to the gods. It measured twenty-one feet round, and was bound up neatly in banana leaves. Generally puddings are made about the size of a melon, neatly enclosed and tied up in green banana leaves and smoked. These, with sweet sauce made from the scraped pulp of the cocoanut and the juice of the sugar cane, well boiled together, are most delicious. Bananas of many kinds are very valuable as a vegetable, and excellent as a fruit, and also of great use as bread when food is scarce. Bananas are now exported to New Zealand. In 1879, forty-three thousand, sixty-two bunches were sent, the quantity increasing immensely each year. The bread-fruit is invaluable, produced spontaneously

and requiring no toil. There are various kinds, and the trees yield several crops each year. It is eaten as a vegetable, and is used for puddings, and to make bread to be hoarded up for times of scarcity; and is also frequently sent where food is not easily obtained, to distant rocky islands to which the owners cling to their own hurt, that they may keep their own freehold property, though of questionable value. The cocoanut is a real treasure, serving a great variety of purposes. The trunk of the tree, which sometimes reaches fifty feet in height, is used for the beams, posts, rafters and tie-beams of houses; the leaves for the thatch, sides, and inner partitions of houses and for baskets, mats and fans; the milk for a delicious beverage—not equaled by ginger-pop or lemonade or zoedone. It also serves for food, is excellent for fattening pigs, and yields valuable oil. The kernel is dried and exported as coppra, to be pressed and squeezed by machinery for oil. Beyond these leading articles, the *kawai*, sweet potatoe, sugar cane, arrow-root, fruit, and nuts of many kinds and sizes are very helpful in meeting the wants and comforts of all ages and all classes. Tobacco, a very questionable article, has long been known there, and used by men, *women* and *children*, but not abused to the same extent as it is among wiser people.

Valuable articles have now been introduced, and find a new home in that tropical soil—such as cotton, coffee, cocoa, tea, rice, spices, and Indian corn or maize; and sugar is now made for home use and for export. The cotton grown in Fiji stood well formerly in the Liverpool market; and one estate, the island

of Mango, lately sold for one hundred thousand pounds sterling, is noted for the production of the fine silky Sea Island cotton, which is supplied direct to the continent of Europe, and gains a high price, having been found to mix with and help silk beyond any class of cotton from any other country. While originally no quadruped was known in Fiji beyond the field mouse, an admirable supply of food was easily obtained of whatever is found in the seas and rivers, and on the flats, sands, and reefs. The people gained a fair supply of sea, shell, and river fish of all sizes and qualities, green and shell turtles, crabs, lobsters, prawns, and shrimps. For a century they have had pigs, fowls, and ducks; and now sheep, cattle, horses, goats, turkeys, peacocks, geese, etc., have been introduced, and some machinery and steam to facilitate and lessen labor.

INDUSTRY AND TACT.

Few natives, in their uncivilized state, in any part of the world, can surpass the Fijians in industry, tact, and cleverness. This is seen in the management of their affairs, in their agriculture, in their building of houses and of canoes, on which we might dwell with interest; and in their spear and club and boat making. Even before they had any edge tools, with the use of stone axes, aided by fire—and that obtained by friction—their workmanship was most creditable, indeed very surprising. Their crockery, said to have been suggested by the clay-nests of the mason-bee, though rude, is very useful for holding and carrying water, for cooking pots and drinking

vessels, and it is a peculiarity, not being found in most other South Sea islands. A great variety of useful articles are made, worthy of notice and description, on which we cannot linger, such as superior fishing nets of all meshes and widths and lengths, adapted to their fishing waters, and to the fish they have to secure. Immense quantities of cloth are made from the bark of the paper mulberry, for dresses, coverlids, mosquito curtains of all sizes, (an essential there for those who desire sleep), neatly printed and ornamental as well as useful; mats of all sizes and plait and substance; sinnet platted from the fibre of the cocoanut husk is of great value for lashing canoes, houses and fences, wooden and clay bowls, etc. The country is prolific and of large extent; the people are well-formed, free from the thick lip and curly hair of the negro. All work, both men and women, beginning their duties with early dawn; they stick to their toil and make the best of their position. The men are first-rate sailors; the women excel in some kinds of fishing, in the making of cloth, mats, and fishing nets, and in cooking in-doors; while men do man's work generally, and heavy out-door cooking on a large scale for special occasions in ovens dug in the earth, which answer remarkably well.

The people are not stingy in sparing time to enjoy themselves at feasts, and dances and games, when their full day's work is done.

Visitors were astonished and pleased at the size and superiority of the principal houses, lofty and of considerable length and width, with very neat

reed fences seven feet high, and thatched securely and beautifully with the leaves of the *pandanus*, and all the main timbers and beams inside wrapped with sinnet in various patterns and colors: at their canoes of all sizes, single and double, some of which are one hundred and thirty feet in length, with immense sails made of matting platted for the purpose: at the rolls and balls of sinnet neatly done up, the largest I ever saw being seven feet high and twelve feet in circumference.

Visitors were surprised also at the variety of articles which afforded proofs of well-being and comfort. Such a people, in a country so good, where quantities of food grow spontaneously, and where both sexes and all classes and ages are industrious, are placed in easy and well-to-do circumstances, comparatively rich.

THEIR ABOMINABLE PRACTICES.

But this fine race, well off and advantageously placed, had in all past ages been left to themselves, and to the undisturbed control of demon spirits, and so became as vile and cruel as human beings could possibly become—"being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity." The special forms of prominent and deplorable evils among them were: polygamy—a pregnant source of utmost disorder and woes; infanticide; strangling; burying alive the sick and the infirm (in love, forsooth!); murder, war, and cruelty; and in cannibalism it is believed that they surpassed the New Zeal-

anders, or any other people. Generally, the flesh of enemies only was eaten, and that in revenge; but there were cases where that was preferred, as in the renowned Ra Undreundre, who relished human flesh intensely, gloried in his shame, and kept count by placing a large stone in a line for each of eight hundred and seventy-two persons of whom he partook after he became a man. They had a well-defined and organized system of worship.

Ndengei was to them the father and originator of all gods and of all men, who upheld the world, and who caused earthquakes by turning himself over. Very numerous were the imaginary local deities, and the spirits of forefathers, who were revered and entreated in war and sickness, for their crops, and when going on a voyage, or in danger at sea. To them, offerings of food and of property were freely and frequently made; and as the highest offering, human beings secured in war were always presented to the gods at the temple, through the priests, before being cooked. These imaginary gods the people everywhere feared, and clung to them with tenacity, through their regular and numerous priesthood, who were revered as persons of importance to be dreaded, and who prized their position, in virtue of which they shared the offerings made, and received the first share of all apportioned to the gods.

MISSION EFFORTS.

But Fijians—fallen with the rest of mankind, and bad by nature and practice—are included in the entire human race who are redeemed by the grand

atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who by the grace of God tasted death for every man," and "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." And, after many generations had passed away—who had been a law unto themselves, with whom the Judge of all the earth will do right,—the offers of mercy and salvation were made to those far-off and long-neglected outsiders. The introduction of the glad tidings of great joy to Fiji was on this wise: The Friendly or Tongan Islands are about two hundred and fifty miles south of Fiji: the Tongans, a copper-colored people, are a fine, powerful, enterprising and courageous race. In sailing between the three groups of their own islands, when overtaken by storms they not unfrequently drifted in their canoes—sometimes many hundreds of miles distant: but generally they were driven by the prevailing trade-winds to Fiji; and they were spared, and gained a footing, and established friendships in the windward part of the group. After getting their canoes well repaired, or new ones built in some instances by the help of their new Fijian friends, they would accompany them to Tonga on their return home, and there receive acknowledgment of their kindness. Other 'Tongans were accustomed, when all were heathen, to go from their low and small and ill-wooded islets to reside in Fiji for years together, to repair old and to build new canoes, in the immense forests of *resi*. (similar to the green heart wood of India), a large, durable, and suitable timber, which abounds in Fiji. When many Tongans became Christians, they

yearned over their dark and degraded neighbors; and beyond the beneficial influence of private Christians, Tongan teachers have, from the beginning of mission work in Fiji to the present time, taken a prominent part and been of immense service as agents in the great work that has been wrought in Fiji. Better men than some of the Tongans with whom I have labored, I have never known anywhere.

What a grand man was the native missionary, Joel Bulu, who was at work in Fiji forty-four years ago, and who has ever since labored with intense zeal, sound judgment, and abundant success in every department of mission work in Fiji, where he lately died in great peace, esteemed and loved by all. Miss Gordon Cumming, in her excellent work, "*At Home in Fiji*," writes: "The first to welcome us on our landing at Bau was the native minister, Joel Bulu, a fine old Tongan chief. His features are beautiful, his color clear olive; he has gray hair and a long, silky, gray beard. He is just my ideal of what Abraham must have been, and would be worth a fortune for an artist as a patriarchal study. His faith is an intense reality. I have rarely met any man so perfectly simple, or so unmistakably in earnest." Again, afterwards, she wrote: "Alas! his work is well-nigh finished. He is greatly changed this week—wasted to a shadow; but his face is perhaps more beautiful than ever, from its sweetness of expression, and the bright look which at times lights it up, just like some grand old apostle nearing his rest." Many Tongans and more Fijians will doubt-

less be the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus!

In 1835 the missionaries in the Friendly Islands were constrained to spare two of their number for pioneer service in Fiji—one the Rev. David Cargill, M.A., of the old Aberdeen University, who soon learned the language, fixed the alphabet, and prepared suitable books for those who were willing to read. First, books were printed at the mission press in Tonga: and also a valuable small book of the first nine chapters of the Gospel according to Matthew, which, you will remember, contains our Lord's incomparable Sermon on the Mount. What a book was that in Fiji! A blessed light in a dark place.

APPEAL AND RE-INFORCEMENT.

Early in 1838 an earnest and powerful appeal was issued in England, urging pity on behalf of cannibal Fiji, which thrilled many hearts, and led to the sending forth of three of us, with our wives, to that mission. This re-inforcement was opportune. We took with us a printing press, and all material for printing and bookbinding. On our arrival we found translations ready, and very soon new books were issued. The labors of our two predecessors had been owned of God, and prospered. Some had abandoned heathenism and become decided Christians—clear in their experience of God's saving grace, and heartily devoted to the cause of Christ. They had stood the test of severe persecution. Some suffered the loss of all things; and we had some martyrs for the truth among the converts and agents.

THAKOMBAU.

Previous to leaving England, I met with a small book entitled "Suggestions for the Conversion of the World." Among the suggestions the writer advised that some individual should be selected whose conversion we should resolve to promote and seek: that that one should be definitely prayed for and spoken to, and that others should be induced to be interested in his or her salvation, and to persevere until efforts and prayers were successful. This I judge to be a wise plan, as any number of special cases could be fixed upon: and instead of that being a hindrance to general effort for the good of others, due attention to these particular cases craned one up to being in good tune for constant service. My mind was early directed to some who were exerting most influence for evil in Fiji, and my heart was soon fixed upon special cases. Most prominent among them was Thakombau, known as "King of Fiji," who is thus described by an American gentleman: "He is extremely good-looking, being tall, well-made, and athletic. He exhibits much intelligence both in his expression of countenance and manners. His features and figure resemble those of a European, and he is graceful and easy in his carriage." This opinion agrees with the description of Captain Erskine: "It was impossible not to admire the appearance of the chief. Of large, almost gigantic size, his limbs were beautifully formed and proportioned: his countenance agreeable and intelligent; whilst his immense head of hair, covered and concealed with ganze, smoke-dried and slightly

tinged with brown, gave him altogether the appearance of an eastern sultan. No garments confined his magnificent chest and neck, or concealed the natural color of the skin, a clear but decided black; and in spite of his paucity of attire (the evident wealth which surrounded him showing that it was a matter of choice and not of necessity) he looked every inch a king."

This was *the* man above and before all others for whose salvation my heart longed. I thought, "Now, if Thakombau, who has gained a position and power in Fiji which no predecessor ever reached or successor will ever gain; who can quickly raise an army of thousands, and destroy the population of towns and islands: if this Saul of Fiji could be converted, what an immense amount of evil would be prevented! and who can tell the good that would thereby be promoted? *And why not?* For the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is exceeding abundant, and fully meets the case of the worst and most determined! O that this man may be converted, and brought to thoughtfulness, concern, decision and salvation!" And for him I earnestly prayed and faithfully labored for fifteen years. For ten of those years I was settled one hundred and fifty miles distant from him; but, whenever I went near to Bau, I always took care to have a talk with him for his benefit: whenever he came to where I resided, for the tribute due him, I had as much and as frequent intercourse with him as was practicable. I sent messages to him; got others interested in him; and for all those years in private and in public

prayed to God for him. Then I was stationed within three miles of his island, with Bau in my charge. Frequently I paid a visit, always endeavoring, as judiciously as I could, to infuse light and instruction into his mind: and to find, lay hold of, and improve his conscience—a very difficult task! While firm and straightforward with him, I always treated him with the respect due to his position. We were on very good terms, and he treated me with respect and kindness. Sometimes I found him in as ugly a temper as man could possibly be in—having been disappointed in some scheme of treachery or in some conflict, or busy premeditating a secret attack upon those he wished to destroy, or in the midst of a cannibal feast, when all were more demonish, and to be avoided. I felt, “Well, I have come three miles with this fearful sun upon my poor pate, to have a word with you: and if I don’t get it, it will be exposure and toil in vain. At the present a word about religion would be out of season, useless, and resented. I must wait awhile, and try again.” So I was accustomed to visit temples and houses in the populous town, drop words here and there, and return to my friend, whom I generally found in a better cue. After conversation with him, I returned home hopefully praying for God’s blessing upon him. He would return my visit, and frequently get alone with me in my bedroom or small verandah-study, and raise discussions, in order to gain a clear knowledge of matters; and also, I found, to get arguments from me with which to assail his priests and old hardened chiefs. I heard

again and 'again of his attacks upon them, advising the high priest to make the best of his time, as it was short, for they would all soon embrace Christianity. One day he asked me to accompany him when an offering was to be made to the gods, that I might see the priest under pretended inspiration. All knew that this was in derision.

It was very gratifying to me to learn that, instead of burying persons alive, or strangling those who were ill or useless, as formerly, he would come to me and ask for a piece of English bread or arrow-root and medicine for them. The bodies of some killed in war he had buried, and not eaten, as had been their invariable custom. He also allowed some of his children to become Christians. Still, he was bound with ten thousand fetters; and the light instilled had a hard struggle with the darkness that so long controlled him.

GAVINDY.

When Gavindy, king of the Bau fishermen, was killed in war, the whole party retreated. I hastened to Bau, to try to prevent the strangling of his widows. On my arrival, to my sorrow I saw that his mother (for a special reason, in place of his principal wife, who was sister to Thakombau) and two of his wives had been sacrificed to accompany the departed. Though too late, I went to the king to repeat my reproof and warning. To my amazement, though his hands had just clutched the death-cord of Gavindy's mother, he was already fast asleep! I waited until he awoke—it being disrespectful to

awaken a chief. When he awoke, on beholding me he started up, exclaiming: "Oh, Mr. Calvert, where have you come from? How now?" I had not dropped from the skies, but just come from Veway, as usual; but he manifestly was uneasy. I said: "I came hoping to be in time to entreat you to spare the lives of the women; but I find that, though you knew it to be wrong, and have often been warned to discontinue the bad custom, you have repeated the shameful practice." He said it was their way, and must be followed while they remained heathen. He asked me what had become of Gavindy's soul? I replied that it was not for me to say; that was with God; but I said: "The Bible declares that the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." I was afterwards told that he said to the people around him, after I left: "Aye! how these missionaries labor to save life! They take any trouble, and go anywhere, to save people; and we foolish Fijians are always trying to destroy one another. What a pity that Mr. Calvert was not in time! Had he been, I would have saved Gavindy's mother." This afforded encouragement and stimulus to me amidst my arduous attempts to prevent this prevalent, disgraceful, and common evil.

TANOA.

We had long striven to prevent the strangling of women, when his father, the old king Tanoa, died. In this we were backed most heartily by several commanders of English and American ships-of-war. We offered ten large whale-teeth weigh-

ing twenty pounds, a whale-boat, and other property; and I offered, in Fijian style, to have a finger cut off, if Thakombau would spare the lives of the women. At length the fatal day arrived; but he, in spite of all entreaties, and against the remonstrances and convictions of his own mind, determined to keep up their old and binding custom, and not allow a man of such high rank as his father to be buried without the usual honor. But still an earnest and long-continued public and private protest had considerable effect; and Thakombau himself, before all his people, quailed under our entreaties, and said: "Here are only five! had it not been for the interference of you missionaries, *many* would have been strangled!"

BONGITHIWA.

On one occasion, I had a Bau chief over at Rewa, under my medical care. He died. I followed his remains to Bau, and asked the king if he would kindly spare Bongithiwa, the wife of Koroi Ubambakolo, who had just died. He said I was to go to his tribe, the Vusarandavis, and request her life from them. I told him I had been to them, and they had refused to grant my request; but an order from him would save a fine, healthy woman, to live and do good work. He then sent off a messenger. I said: "Please tell him to make haste, as she has gone to be bathed, oiled, and dressed for death." On which he said: "*Kusarawa*, Ratu Wangka." "Make haste, Ratu Wangka." When he reached the house, the strangling-cord was prepared. "The

king has sent me, at Mr. Calvert's request, to order you to spare the life of Bongithiwa." The holder of the strangling-cord was enraged, and threw it down, saying: "Then I suppose we are to die like nobody now." The sooner the better, if having poor women strangled when you die, be dying as somebody! This was my first victory and triumph over this abomination, and gave me heart and hope and comfort. Whenever I saw the woman afterwards, she smiled upon me, in gratitude for her rescue.

WAR AT NANDY.

War was waging at Nandy, one hundred and twenty miles distant. The heathen resolved to destroy the Christians, who had fled to the mission premises. I went over to the king, presented a whale's tooth, and begged him to interpose and stop the war, as the missionary Moore and his family and property were in danger. He refused, saying the Christians near him had left him in the lurch, saying it was not lawful for them to fight and kill people! and so, while he and his heathen people were exposed in war, attacked by disease while sleeping out in the dew and rain, and their backs almost broken in steering their war canoes, the Christians remained at home, planted and ate their food, slept soundly and securely all night long, read their books, and prayed to God: "*Tamai Kectou sutike mailomalagi, me rakarokarokotaki uu yacamu, me yaco mai na uomu lewa, mecaka na uomu veitalia s ruravura me unka mai lomalagi*" —repeating a part of the Lord's

Prayer. I entreated him not to allow the missionary and his family to remain in jeopardy, when he could so easily prevent the danger: and told him that he ought to do it, as he had promised commanders of Her Majesty's ships that he would protect the missionaries. "*Su bese ni tarora nai valu! Au cata na nomu dou lotu!*"—"I will not prevent the war! I hate your religion!" I replied. "I knew before I left England that you hated religion: for the Bible says, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'" "Oh yes: of course you know everything!" he responded. I said, "I hope you will be serious: this is an important matter: life is at stake. Mr. Moore and family are in peril. You can relieve them. You promised you would, and you ought to do so. And should evil come upon them, you will not like to hear it reported on board the next ship-of-war that comes here, that you could easily have preserved the mission family, and were entreated to do so, *but you would not*. I hope you will be *galorinaka, suka*—of a good mind, sir—and stop the war." "I tell you I shall not! moreover I hate your religion." "Yes, I know that; you told me so just now: and what will you do with it? Will you put a stop to Christianity?" "No, no; I cannot do that. I know we shall all become Christians; but not yet. And, while we are heathen and have to fight, I am so glad that you Christians also have to wage war: for you have a fight of your own." Ultimately, however, he put an end to that conflict—and the missionary and Christians were preserved.

DECISION.

At last, after many troubles and dangers and personal afflictions, and much and long-continued direct instruction, such as few are favored with, and an urgent and most timely letter from King George of Tonga, Thakombau firmly decided that he would totally abandon heathen worship and vile practices: would cease to do evil and learn to do well: and would seek the favor and blessing of Almighty God. On the 30th of April, 1854, we assembled in the large Strangers' House. The two large wooden drums, known as "*Rogorogoi Valu*"—publishers of war—were struck to assemble those in Bau who were now willing to enroll themselves under the banner of the Prince of Peace. The king, preceded by his grey-headed, long-bearded family priest, was followed by about one hundred and fifty persons, with clean faces and suitably clad, to worship the true and living God. My heart was deeply affected with this most pleasing sight and blessed reality! I rejoiced exceedingly to conduct that service, a new beginning of good. On that memorable day, all those ovens behind the Strangers' House, used for cooking human flesh, were forever closed! That which had long burdened my heart, and in the past terribly hindered the spread of the truth, was now removed, and special promise of help and success now afforded.

The king commenced at once with family worship morning and evening, and obtained a bell to summon all from the adjoining outhouses. From the first he was an example to all for regular attend-

ance on week-evening services and prayer-meetings, as well as on the Sabbath. He chose and was married to his principal wife, the mother of several children, who, in their mother's dignity, stood in an important position both in the household and the state, and at once he abandoned, or rather set at liberty, all the rest of his wives. But he did not very soon obtain deliverance from the many and powerful sins which had so long fettered him. The strong man armed within him resisted the spoiling of his goods. But he was anxious to be really right; and he repented and prayed, and hoped in God's mercy through Christ.

THE HIGH PRIEST.

The king acted very carefully and wisely and firmly. But he had many and all sorts of difficulties with himself and with others to grapple with. The high priest had become avowedly Christian; but he was fearfully annoyed that his new religion, by which he was utterly destitute, was a considerable loss to him, as thereby ceased all his marriage and other perquisites as priest of the national temple of the reputed god Thangawalu, whose forehead was said to be eight spans high. Whereupon he got up a great excitement, pretending that the god had again entered him, and vowed that the king and his town and government would be ruined if he continued Christian. A teacher was sent to pray with the agitated priest; but that sort (God covetousness) did not go out by prayer. Next day, the king, on being informed that the priest was still under the powerful

sway of the god, and having heard how King George of the Friendly Islands had acted under similar circumstances, he sent for the priest. As soon as he was seated before him, the king, having prepared the remedy in the form of a good stick, gave him a somewhat severe whacking. This surprised and shocked the poor old fellow, whom none had ever dared to handle in such a way, and he cried out, "*Au sa mate! au sa mate!*"—"I'm dead! I'm dead!" It was a perfect cure. Of course we were not consulted, and had nothing to do with this harsh way of expelling pretended demons. But the high priest having been successfully operated upon, and by the king himself, all the smaller priests took warning; and we had no trouble on this score, where otherwise we should have been greatly bothered by those whose craft was gone.

SHAVING.

The king not getting right so soon as he had hoped, he had considerable searchings of heart, and one day he said to his wife, who had already been made happy by a gracious change of heart, "I'll have my beard off." We never asked them to shave and sacrifice the handsome beards they cultivated, and would not without Scripture precept, which we had not. But the converts observed that the missionaries one and all were smooth-faced gentlemen; and the people who became nominal and real Christians, supposed it right to imitate us; and off went their beautiful beards. How they got them off with the miserable razors they obtained, I could not tell; but

they endured the ordeal, and were clean shaved. And the king said he would suffer the loss—having a notion, no doubt, that it was becoming. But his wife knew the man; and our wives will often give us valuable hints very profitable, if we will take them. She said, “Let your beard alone! Get your heart right! and then, if your beard comes off it will be without making any fuss about it!”

HE BECAME A REAL, CONSISTENT AND HEARTY
CHRISTIAN.

He was very regular at all the means of grace; and especially at his class-meeting, which was a much-needed, great, and agreeable help to him, and was highly appreciated by him. When he left home to visit his dominions he required a class-leader and teacher to accompany him, that he might not suffer loss. And when it was not convenient to hold religious services in the houses which he and his attendants occupied, plenty of room was always found out of doors in the banana plantations, bread-fruit groves, or in the woods. “Where there’s a will there’s a way!” And “the Lord helps those who help themselves!” And so King Thakombau was saved and happy and devoted. He tried to do all the good he could where he had done so much evil. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” At baptism he chose the name “Ebenezer,” as hitherto the Lord had preserved and helped him. And his wife’s name became Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened. He afterwards ceded the islands to Britain; and he had an allowance of fifteen hun-

dred pounds sterling a year from the new government, and retained the splendid island of Motunki, where I was furiously attacked in June, 1854, by a hundred savage natives, who vowed they would kill me because they had been ill-treated by the whites; but from that dreadful death, the Lord alone rescued me.

After the annexation of Fiji to Great Britain, the ex-king was most loyal to the new government, and he exerted great influence with and rendered most valuable help to the Governor, which was heartily and gratefully acknowledged. For nearly twenty-nine years this remarkable man maintained a good Christian character; and his influence in behalf of Christianity and of good in general among the people has been immense. His devoted partner passed away in great peace in 1881, to his sincere grief. And eighteen months after her death, he died, trusting in Christ, and calling upon his name, on the first of February, this year [1883].

The Rev. F. Langham writes to me: "He died well. It would have rejoiced your heart if you could have seen the grand old warrior, for grand he certainly did look as he lay on his mat, saying he trusted alone in Jesus, his living Saviour. His son Timothy, and his daughters knelt with me while I prayed the waiting Saviour to receive the departing spirit. I could hardly get words out, for we were all weeping. Yet we were thankful that he ended his stormy life so peacefully. What a stir there must have been in the Land of the Blest, when many who had heard of him now saw him: and those who

preceded him, now met him in light and blessedness. You may imagine that I miss the old man. He was always so regular at church; and one of the best hearers I ever saw; and how appropriately he used to pray! with what sweet simplicity! You remember what choice language he used! He had a fine command of Fijian words. It was always a treat to listen to him, whether in prayer or in class meeting, or the love feast. Well, it was something worth doing to win him for the Saviour! Thank God for such a glorious trophy of redeeming mercy: and what a multitude have been won to a profession of religion, and brought to know the Saviour, through the knowledge of his conversion, and his influence and example!"

Many specimens similar to this might be related: but this one with which many incidents are connected, so that it could not be abridged and still complete, is all that our time will allow. And I now close with a brief compressed statement of

THE GENERAL WORK OF MISSIONARIES IN FIJI.

Soon as any were converted and gained new life in their souls, they became deeply earnest in prayer and effort for the benefit of others. We have had several blessed and extensive revivals which have told much upon our cause, when many sought and found mercy. A great and glorious work of God has been wrought throughout Fiji, which is most manifest to all who honestly examine it. The Spirit of God accompanied the plain, straightforward preaching of the word. Many thousands have been

clearly saved, been very useful, have lived and died happy in Christ, and are forever with the Lord. Cruel practices and degrading superstitions are extinct. Marriage is sacred, the Sabbath kept, family worship regularly conducted, schools established everywhere, law and good government well laid, and spiritual churches formed. A native ministry is raised up for every branch of the work, which is firmly established, and still abides in vigor. The language has been reduced to written form; and two editions of a grammar and dictionaries have been printed. Five thousand copies of the whole Bible, fifty thousand of the New Testament, and innumerable portions of God's Word have been supplied to and purchased by the native converts. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Hunt's *System of Christian Theology*, and *Catechism with Scripture Proof* are read and studied and prized. And notwithstanding the very heavy loss of population by measles, the returns just to hand report 1,253 chapels and other preaching places—53 native ministers, 44 catechists, 1,019 head teachers; all of whom are mainly supported by the people for whom they labor. There are also 1,877 local preachers and 2,700, mainly gratuitous, school teachers; 42,909 scholars, 1,842 schools. Church members, * 27,421: 4,121 on trial; and 3,192 class-leaders. Attendants on public worship, 100,534.

Well may it be asked, "What hath God wrought?" "It is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes!" "In the wilderness, waters have

* Since increased to over 50,000.

broken out, and streams in the desert. The parched ground has become a pool, and the thirsty land streams of water." "Instead of the thorn the fir-tree has come up; instead of the brier the myrtle tree. It is to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel—and the God of the whole earth—who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

1. This grand work among such a people affords additional, new and strong *proof* that the religion of Christ is as true, powerful and effective now, as when first established on the day of Pentecost—is still the power of God unto every one that believeth: and it is adapted to the condition of all men everywhere.

2. By this work each one of all our race is pointed to the one only and all-sufficient remedy for sin and misery, available for each. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

3. And hereby each one here is urged not to trifle or delay, but to secure for himself speedily his highest good. Whatever you have or have not beside, lay firm hold on eternal life, and ever hold fast this immense treasure. And take your full share in trying to benefit others.

CORYDON, Dec. 4, 1882.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

No language can describe the horrible condition of Fiji when John Hunt and James Calvert appeared upon the scene in December, 1838. Cannibalism was universal. The heathenism of the people reached the most appalling depths of cruelty and abomination. The most dreadful tortures were inflicted upon the poor victims who were selected for cannibalistic feasts. Sometimes their limbs were cut off while still living, and cooked and eaten before their eyes; and sometimes their own cooked flesh was offered them to eat. And there the climax of fiendish brutality was reached: Satan certainly had done his worst.

The Psalmist prayed, "Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." And surely it is in the covenant that all these dark places shall be illumined by the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

How swiftly has the Gospel transformed Fiji into a nation of Christian people! These ferocious people, when they were converted, became gentle, loving and faithful Christians.

John Hunt died at the age of thirty-six. He fell at his post at the head of a conquering army of native Christians, and in his short lifetime he had given a signal illustration of what one man can do when fired with a lofty purpose and full of the love of God. Into ten years he crushed the work of a lifetime. When it was feared that he must die, the converts gathered around him, and one of them cried, "If one must die, take me: take ten of us: but spare Thy servant to preach Christ to the people!" But as the time drew near for his departure, he grasped Mr. Calvert with one hand, and raising the other, he cried, "O let me pray once more for Fiji! Lord, for Christ's sake bless Fiji! Save Fiji! Save Thy servants! Save Thy people! Save the heathen in Fiji!" Then turning his eyes heavenward he cried, "I trust in Jesus. He is my joy. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

The native Christians came from far and near to look upon the face of the revered dead, and at three o'clock the next day some native students bore to the grave a plain coffin, inscribed,

"REV. JOHN HUNT,

SLEPT IN JESUS. OCT. 4TH. 1848.

AGED 36 YEARS."

